

this vessel provided daily service between Juneau, Haines and Skagway.

The feeder routes connect the smaller communities of southeast Alaska with each other and with the southeast Alaska mainline communities (Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, Sitka, Juneau, Haines and Skagway) that serve as regional centers for commerce, government, health services, and/or connections to other transportation systems. The feeder routes serve primarily local residents, and include Angoon, Hollis, Hoonah, Hyder, Kake, Metlakatla, Pelican, and Tenakee.

The M/V Aurora and the M/V LeConte provide service on the feeder routes. When both vessels are in operation, the M/V LeConte serves the area between Petersburg and Skagway, and the M/V Aurora operates between Ketchikan, Metlakatla, and Hollis, with limited service to Hyder. Service to Hyder is discontinued in the winter due to low traffic volume. When either vessel is off-line, the other vessel provides service for the entire feeder route system.

The southeast system connects with the continental road system at Bellingham, Washington; Stewart, British Columbia (Hyder); Prince Rupert, British Columbia; Haines, Alaska; and Skagway, Alaska.

Southwest Alaska Routes

The southwest system serves Prince William Sound, Kodiak Island, the Alaskan Peninsula, and the Aleutian Islands. The M/V Tustumena provides regular service between Kodiak, Port Lions, Seldovia, Homer and Seward. The M/V Tustumena also makes trips to Valdez and Cordova.

Approximately six times each year, between April and October, the M/V Tustumena travels out the Aleutian chain to Unalaska/Dutch Harbor, stopping at Chignik, Sand Point, King Cove, False Pass, Akutan and Cold Bay en route. This trip is not made in the winter because of adverse weather conditions. Monthly "whistle-stop" service is also provided to Chenega Bay on the route between Seward and Cordova or Valdez.

Service in Prince William Sound to Valdez, Cordova and Whittier is provided by the M/V Bartlett.

"Whistle-stop" service is also provided to Tatitlek/Ellamar. Tourists comprise a high percentage of the Prince William Sound traffic in the summer, especially between Valdez and Whittier.

In the winter months, when traffic demand is significantly reduced, and weather conditions worsen, service is suspended to Whittier and reduced between Valdez and Cordova. When the M/V Bartlett is out of service, the M/V Tustumena provides service between Valdez and Cordova. When the M/V Tustumena is off-line, however, there has been no other open-ocean certified vessel in the fleet to replace it and service to Kodiak, Port Lions, Homer, Seward, and Seldovia is suspended. While this was true for the M/V Tustumena's 1998 overhaul, the addition of the M/V Kennicott to the fleet will, in future years, at least give transportation planners the option of continuing this service.

The southwest system connects with the continental road system at Valdez, Homer, Seward, and Whittier (via the Alaska Railroad to Portage).

Cross-Gulf Service

The M/V Kennicott joined the fleet in summer 1998, the first new vessel for the AMHS in more than 20 years. As a vessel certified to operate in open waters, the M/V Kennicott enabled transportation planners to expand ferry service to include regular cross-gulf sailings. Also known as "inter-tie trips", these sailings connected southeastern Alaska with south central and southwest regions of the state.

Most cross-gulf trips include a stop at the port of Yakutat, a community that is unique in that it is only served on the cross-gulf route. During 1998, the AMHS was able to provide its first call to Yakutat in five years.

Comparisons to 1997

Care must be taken when comparing the traffic data for 1998 to the prior year. A fishermen's blockade of the M/V Malaspina on July 19, 1997 resulted in a 138-day suspension of service to the Canadian port of Prince Rupert. Limited service was restored Dec. 4, with one trip per week by the M/V Aurora. The disruption had a major impact on AMHS traffic.